diversification of bilateral trade and deepening of economic relations between India and China.

Meeting of Joint Boundary Working Group of India and Bangladesh

3516. SHRI TARINI KANTA ROY :
SHRI PRASANTA CHATTERJEE:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number and details of meetings of Joint Boundary Working Group between India and Bangladesh that have taken place so far to resolve issues pertaining to 1974 Land Boundary Agreement; and

(b) whether the issue of exchange of enclaves featured in these meetings?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED) : (a) and (b) The Joint Boundary Working Groups between India and Bangladesh have met twice so far to resolve issues pertaining to 1974 Land Boundary Agreement. The first meeting was held in Dhaka from July 2—4, 2001 and the second meeting took place in New Delhi from March 26-27, 2003. These two meetings covered boundary related issues including demarcation of about 6.5 kilometres of undemarcated border, exchange of enclaves as well as adversely possessed territories.

Missing RAW officers

3517. SHRI AMAR SINGH:
SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of officers of RAW who are still missing at present;

(b) since when these officers are missing;

(c) whether it is a fact that one of the officers of the rank of Joint Secretary who mysteriously disappeared about two years back was spotted in U.K. and if so, the details thereof; and

(d) whether that officer had been brought back from that country and if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI ANAND SHARMA) : (a) No officer presently on the rolls of R&AW is missing.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) One absconding officer was dismissed from service and his current whereabouts are not conclusively known.

(d) Does not arise.

SAARC Observer

3518. SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT :
SHRIMATI S. G. INDIRA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India backed US as SAARC observer;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that various countries such as China and Japan have shown interest to become as SAARC observers;

(d) if so, whether India backed such proposal; and

(e) if so, the reason therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED) : (a) to (e) The 13th SAARC Summit held in Dhaka in November, 2005 had welcomed and agreed in principle with the desire of the People's Republic of China and Japan to be associated as Observers. It had also decided that the SAARC Council of Ministers would decide the modalities in this regard at their 27th meeting, which is scheduled to be held in July, 2006. Subsequently, Republic of Korea (ROK) and USA have also formally requested for Observer status with SAARC. The 5th Special Session of the SAARC Standing Committee, which met on April 11, 2006 to draw up the modalities for Observers also considered the requests from ROK and USA and recommended that the requests be approved. The SAARC Council of Ministers will further consider the issue in July, 2006. All decisions in SAARC are taken on the basis of unanimity.